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ROME AND THE REVOLUTION :

A SERMON

BY

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ROME AND THE REVOLUTION.

If the world hate you, know ye that it hated Me before you.

ST. JOHN, XV. 18.

IF the first Sunday in October were not set apart by the solemn usage of the Church for the festival of the Holy Rosary, it might be thought that we had appointed it this year for a special design. The ink is hardly dry upon a document, which for its solemnity and its signatures exceeds in public importance any that has ever, perhaps, emanated from the Anglican Communion. It contains a protest against the claim of universal sovereignty for the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and against the intercession of the Blessed Mother of God. We are met to-day to ask her prayers in behalf of the Sovereign Pontiff. What we do protests against this protest; and at first sight, indeed, it would appear as if the act of to-day and that declaration were in irreconcilable contradiction. I would fain hope not; and it is my purpose not to place them in discord, but, if I can, to bring them into harmony. It may seem hardly credible, but it is true, that the protest as it stands, and interpreted by the letter, any Catholic might sign. It is indeed a strange result that this

authoritative document, so formidable and hostile in expression, should contain, when analysed, nothing which any Catholic would hesitate to affirm. I do not say what was the intention of the framers, nor whether this interpretation be such as the Catholic Church would warrant. But let us hope the best. Certainly it is not the work of charity to exaggerate discrepancies, nor to elevate what can be swept away, into mountains of separation. The chief teachers of the Anglican Communion have protested against the 'pretension of universal sovereignty over God's heritage asserted for the See of Rome.' But who asserts this universal sovereignty? Primacy of honour and supremacy of jurisdiction over the universal Church, in virtue of the power of the keys given to Peter and his successors, is indeed a truth, for which all Catholics would lay down their lives. Sovereignty over the patrimony of St. Peter; this, too, we know and understand. But sovereignty over the universal Church, no council, pontiff, or theologian has ever claimed. Here, then, we are in accordance. Next, the protest denounces those who practically exalt 'the Blessed Virgin Mary as mediator in the place of her Divine Son.' To this also we say, if any man put the Mother of God in the place of her Divine Son, let him be anathema. The protest does not say that the Catholic Church, dogmatically or doctrinally, sets the Blessed Virgin in the place of her Son—thus far, at least, is gain—but that it practically does so. You can best answer this imagination. Is there one of you so unsound in mind, is there any little Catholic child so unintelligent, as to confound the

creature with the Creator, and to mistake the Mother of Jesus for the infinite, eternal, incomprehensible, uncreated God? Here, again, then, we are in agreement. And, lastly, we are warned against 'addressing prayers to her as the Intercessor between God and man.' But here, once more, we have no difference. 'The Intercessor' here must mean, if it mean anything, 'the Intercessor of redemption.' The Catholic Church does not believe the Blessed Mother of God to be *the* Intercessor between God and man. She did not shed her blood for the redemption of the world. Against such a portent of heresy we protest even more intensely than the protesters. We are, therefore, in full accordance on this point also; unless it be meant that the Blessed Virgin is not an intercessor at all. If this be meant, these high authorities have need to look to their faith. And how far this denunciation of asking the prayers of the Blessed Mother of God will promote the union which the Anglican Church is so ardently seeking with the Churches of the East, it is not for me to say. I am afraid the Oriental Christians will not stay to analyse the proposition as we have done, hoping to make the best of it; but will take it as it sounds, and treat it promptly, with no favour. But, for ourselves, let us take the benefit of such rules of interpretation as are current in these days; and so interpreted, this solemn protest is altogether an innocent proclamation. I am not sure that I have attained its meaning or the intentions of its framers; but, like a nebula, half luminous, half obscure, it passes harmless over our heads, and the festival of the Holy Rosary will wipe it out of the sky.

Last year, on this day, we made intercession before our Divine Lord, in the Blessed Sacrament, through the prayers of His Blessed Mother, in behalf of the person and authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. It was then a moment of great anxiety. On the twelfth of the following December the protection of France was to be withdrawn. It was prophesied that when 'the foreign bayonets' were gone, in twenty-four hours the Romans would rise, and the power of the Pontiff would be dissolved. They were withdrawn; and where are the prophets? Pius IX. reigns calmly still. In the month of June last, half the bishops of the world were gathered around the throne which ought to have been in dust. And now, again, before Rosary Sunday has returned, the chief antagonist of the Holy Father, the man who has earned his fame by bravade against the Vicar of Jesus Christ, has, by the just authority of his king, been rendered harmless. Such are the events of this twelvemonth past. We are entering on another year. I cannot foretell what it may bring forth. It is full of menace, and of peril, and all things seem tending to a crisis. But the events of the year gone by are an encouragement for the year to come.

We may be told that they were but political and human agencies which protected the Holy Father. Be it so. God works through the politics and actions of men. They are instruments in His hands, and over all their powers there is a will and a control which directs and restrains them. God works through the combinations of rulers, whether they will or no; and brings about His ends by the most adverse and

unlikely means. There is nothing in the present danger of the Holy See which has not often been before. Its existence in the world is a perpetual miracle: divinely founded, it has been divinely preserved. The power of the Pontiff forms an exception in the history of the world. His spiritual power needs no human aid. Neither kings nor emperors have been able to arrest nor have presumed to patronise it. His temporal power has subsisted for a thousand years by a continuous intervention of Divine Providence. It has never possessed a military force able to cope with the weakest temporal prince. It has existed in the midst of mighty antagonists, any one of which might have crushed it; and, by some strange gift of perpetual stability, it has survived all shocks. Always threatened, but always safe—as the Apostle says: ‘We suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not: always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake: that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.’ (2 Cor. iv. 9–11.) The Pontiffs have thereby represented to the world the union of weakness and power. Five-and-forty times they have been driven out of Rome, or have never entered it. Expulsion, banishment, dethronement; this has been their history. No line of kings has ever survived such vicissitudes—their lines have been broken, and their dynasties have passed away. But the line of the Pontiffs is indefectible, and their throne has

always been restored. To be protected by the power of Christian nations—first by one, then by another—has always been their providential lot. It could not be otherwise. The Divine Founder of the Church has so disposed it that His kingdom should not be numbered among the nations; nor its head, though supreme over all Princes, hold his own by temporal might or military power. Vicissitudes which would have destroyed all other dynasties fall lightly upon the throne of the Pontiffs. Subverted again and again, it is as often restored in undiminished authority. It does not, therefore, make us afraid to see the armed bands of revolution closing round the remnant of the territory, and aiming at the seizure of Rome. What has been often, may be again: but we pray on in confidence; knowing that so long as there is a Christian world, so long the temporal power will survive. It is not the might of any nation which sustains it, but the instinct of faith and the dictate of justice which pervade and govern the Christian nations of the world. When these are extinguished or enfeebled, the anti-Christian revolution may prevail against the temporal power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ: but till then, never. It may be menaced and persecuted, but it will endure. If it be now again overthrown, we believe that it will be again set up. Such is our confidence, and for this we pray. As I said last year, we go out to battle with not so much as a sling and a stone, but with a string of beads, a superstitious multitude.

But there are still other thoughts which press upon me to-day. Our Lord has prepared us for

the hostility which is everywhere about us. 'If the world hate you, know ye that it hated Me before you;' and that, in proportion to our separation from the world. 'If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' Now, of this we have a signal example. There are two persons whose names are in almost daily contrast. Is there any one on whom such a continuous stream of contempt and bitterness is poured as Pius IX.? There seems to be a delight in recounting his dangers and humiliations, in predicting his downfall, in encouraging his enemies, in justifying their actions, in bidding God-speed to their conspiracies, and glorying over their violence. If things turn in his favour, there is disappointment and irritation; if they go against him, there is exultation and joy. Why? Not for any known reason, but because he is Pope; and, as such, most like his Master. Such, for the most part, is the tone of our journals.* Nevertheless, I must here openly bear witness that my words do not apply to certain public writers who in the last year have shown much restraint and justice in their language. On the other hand, there is a man whose name I will not

* The Florence Correspondent of the *Times*, dating October 12, writes:—'As matters now stand, we may hold the danger to be averted. A complete change has occurred, within a few days, in the tone of certain parties and journals here. Some who recently were wishing success to the Papal Zouaves are now hot in the contrary sense. The manner in which the situation has been appreciated by the English press has had a powerful effect in Italy.'—*Times*, October 17, 1867.

utter, whose antecedents and impieties I will not recite. He has made himself conspicuous by enmity against the Church and the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Within the last three weeks this man has been twice described by those who guide the public opinion of this country in the words which follow: as a man of 'almost Godlike self-denial,' and, again, 'of a boundless goodness.' I had thought that there was but One Infinite, 'that none is good but God alone.' What comes next is still more portentous—his 'goodness passeth all understanding,' which would appear to be an attribute of our Divine Redeemer borrowed from the language of St. Paul. We have here the two standing face to face before us. The one the object of the world's enmity, the other the object of the world's admiration, or rather of the world's apotheosis or deification. Now, these two persons represent two systems, two principles, two spirits. They are the legitimate heads of 'the mystery of piety,' and 'the mystery of impiety,' as the Apostle describes them. On the one side is the Vicar of Christ, and all that are united to him by the laws of supernatural justice. On the other, the antagonist of Christ, and all who are banded together against His Church on earth. Between these there can be no reconciliation or compromise. There is an intrinsic enmity, an essential variance, derived from their very nature. We have not far to seek for the reasons of this enmity.

First, this enmity, it is directed against the revelation of Christianity, as such, which, by making known the truth, has limited the licence of the human reason. The revelation that there is one

God has narrowed the liberty of the human intelligence. No man is at liberty to think that there are many Gods, or that there is no God. Polytheism and Atheism are not only follies, but sins. In like manner, by revealing the Incarnation of His Son, God has imposed another limit on the freedom of the human reason. No man is at liberty to say that God is not incarnate. And so of every revealed truth, of the Church, of the Seven Sacraments, as also of every known truth of every kind; the liberty of the human reason to dispute at will is restrained by being elevated to the light of knowledge. Nevertheless men resent this as a bondage.

This, if possible, is still more true of the revealed law of God. The Divine Commandments which require obedience, justice, truth, and purity, are so far limitations of human freedom. Men are not at liberty to violate these laws. They have no right to be disobedient, unjust, untruthful, impure. The will has no right of liberty to infringe these laws at choice. It is this yoke of faith and law, imposed upon the intelligence and the will, that galls and irritates the world.

So, again, the Church is a more explicit object of their enmity, because it is to the Church that God has committed the custody and the execution of His truth and law. The Church—as witness, teacher, and judge—contradicts and offends the spirit of licence to the quick. It will not compromise, it will not be silent, it will not connive, it will not accommodate its doctrines to modern progress, or to the new developments of religious or secular

thought. Immutably, inflexibly, it witnesses and teaches, judges and condemns. And this variance is rendered still more intense by its moral teaching. It assumes to pronounce upon the right and the wrong of public legislation, of domestic authority, of personal conduct. It will not indulge either tyranny or rebellion, oppression or sedition. It will not sanction the despotism of parents nor the disobedience of children. It will not suffer unrebuked the scandals of public immorality or the licence of private vice. It is a censor of our lives, and an inexorable judge not only of what we do, but even of what we are. And this is all the more galling, because of the standard of morals it holds up before the world. It is not content to teach the bare letter of the Ten Commandments. It requires of men obedience to a discipline, and to precepts which exact interior conformity of the heart and will. And even more than this. It holds up as a standard to be honoured, if not to be imitated, by all, a life of counsels, and a state of perfection, the most contrary and mortifying to the world and to the flesh; obedience, poverty, and chastity: 'extinct virtues' which are still so vigorous in the members of the Church and in religious Orders throughout the Christian world, that they must needs be cut down and rooted out by spoliation, prohibition, dissolution, and endless contempt.

But there is yet another object of the world's enmity more visible and more within its reach. The faith is impalpable, the Church is too vast to be controlled, its morality can only be derided; but the priesthood may be grasped. It is a tangible enemy, and men

may lay hands upon it. Moreover, to the priesthood is committed the office of making the revelation of God an authoritative reality among men. Priests are teachers, guides, and judges; they are in constant contact and in perpetual conflict with the world. The more like they are to their Master, the more hated they must be; the more faithfully they bear witness against the world which crucified Him, the more they inherit the scandal and the enmity of the Cross. It is inevitable. A holy priesthood must be hated by the world. It is false to say that the priesthood is hated for the sins of priests. The world would not hate them if they were like itself. It hates them because they are unlike it, and because they remind it of their Master.

But last of all, and above all, there is one on whose sole head all those enmities descend at once. They are concentrated upon the Vicar of Jesus Christ, who most nearly represents Him to the world. All the enmities against the Divine truth and the Divine law, against the Church and its morality, against religious orders and the priesthood, fall at once upon the chief witness for the revelation of Christianity, the Head of the Church, the guardian of morality, and the protector of the priesthood. All these things meet eminently in his person, and all the hatred of the world against these things he bears in an eminent degree, and that in our behalf. There is an instinct in the world which tells it that if the shepherd be smitten the sheep of the flock might be scattered; that if the head of the Christian superstition could be

overthrown, the battle would be half won. Therefore it is that all the conspiracies of men are attracted to one point. Their whole array of heresy and schism, of infidelity and impiety, of sedition and revolution, is directed against the person who in himself sums up and represents to the world the rights of God and of His Church. You see then before you the two persons, and the two systems. The conflict is perpetual, and their enmity is irreconcilable. They may be called two Churches and two Gospels. On the one side is the Church of 'men of good will,' one, holy, visible, and universal; on the other, the *ecclesia malignantium*, as the Scriptures call it, the Church of men of evil will; one in enmity against the Church of God, though manifold as the multiplicity of evil; unholy in thought, word, deed, intention, and will; invisible, because secret, stealthy, subterraneous, working out of sight, and in darkness undermining the private purities of home, the public order of States, the thrones of princes, above all the throne of the Sovereign Pontiff, in whom both spiritual and civil powers unite. It is not more certain that the Catholic Church spreads visibly over the earth than that an anti-Christian conspiracy of infidelity and revolution spreads in secret under the Christian world. These two systems are in presence of each other. Hitherto the Christian order has maintained its supremacy. How long it shall endure, God only knows. So long as there is a Christian world, the temporal power of the Pontiffs will be sustained by its conscience and its instincts; when the temporal power is dissolved the Christian world will be dis-

solved with it. Therefore, all the storm is pointed at the Vicar of Christ. He holds the key of the position; or rather, his own sacred person is its strength. And these two Churches have their two Gospels. The one is contained in the Encyclical and Syllabus of Pius IX. in 1864. In it are condemned the chief errors which are now menacing the Christian society of the world. The other was preached the other day at Geneva. In the former are promulgated the great truths and laws on which the Church, the State, and the family repose. It declares the obligations and authority of reason and revelation, of the Christian and civil law, of the Church and of the State. It confirms the lawful authority of rulers, and the duty of obedience in subjects. It is the Gospel of order, peace, and purity to all mankind. The other was proclaimed by the 'goodness which passeth all understanding;' incomprehensible, indeed, but happily not divine. Its chief dogmas are 'that the Papacy must be destroyed,' and 'that the religion of God must be propagated throughout the world.' At the sound of a religion to be propagated, the indévout and indocile disciples cried 'No, no.' But the religion of God was soon so explained as to allay their fears. It is the religion of science, of reason, and of genius, the apostles of which I will not name. I had thought that the religion of reason had hardly survived its last great festival, when that deity was worshipped on the high altar in Notre Dame, impersonated in a form I will not describe. The religion of science is at this day somewhat capricious. It traces mankind to a progenitor among the least

graceful and most grotesque of creatures, and affirms that thought is phosphorus, the soul a name for the complex of nerves, and, if I rightly understand its mysteries, that our moral sense is a secretion of sugar. From want of light my exposition may be heterodox, but of one thing I am certain, that this religion of God is founded in the denial and destruction of Christianity and the Vicar of Christ. But in all this there is nothing new. It is the same stupidity of unbelief, the same persecuting bigotry of the infidel revolution, which from age to age has periodically tormented the Christian world. This same delirious impiety was preached more than half a century ago, only it was then not by an Italian, but by a Frenchman. France was then the 'first of nations' which was to send forth its spirit and to renew the face of the earth. Now it is Italy. Only the other day I read a rhapsody on the mission of Italy among the nations. It was the utterance of the prophet of the Italian revolution. Italy is to teach the nations how to live, by abolishing Christianity. Let us hear, then, how this Gospel was preached some seventy years ago. In the *Moniteur* of June 1793, appeared certain letters of ghostly counsel to the Pope. The admonitions begin as follows:—'You, Holy Father, who trample under foot the ashes of the Camilluses and the Cincinnatuses; you who gravely play your ridiculous farces on the superb theatre where the Scipios and the Paulus Æmiliuses dragged in triumph kings bound to their chariots, do you really think that liberty is so easily snatched from a people ardent to preserve it? The Declaration of the Rights of

Man contains in itself a force absolutely invincible, because it is the force of nature. Never did Zoroaster and Confucius, Solon and Lysurgus, Numa, or Jesus; never did any sage of antiquity present a code of morals more simple, more natural, more attractive. What a majestic spectacle to see the first nation of Europe rise up altogether, and, with one only voice, say, *I am free, and I will that the whole human race be free together with me.* People of all climes, arise! shake off the chains of credulity, of error, of superstition, and of despotism! Let us no longer suffer a barbarous caste to lead us astray in *seeking a chimerical salvation.* *Perish the priesthood!* It is with our earthly happiness that we ought to occupy ourselves. Assemble your people, Holy Father; arise in the midst of them, and say, Descendants of the grandest people of the world, too long imposture has desecrated your country; the day of truth is come. Cast off all ridiculous fables. Enter again into the enjoyment of your natural rights. Be free and sovereign. Be you the only legislators. Restore the republic of Rome! But to save you from the vices and the abuses which destroyed the ancient republic, do not suffer among you patricians, nor knights, nor cardinals, nor prelates, nor bishops, nor priests, nor monks, nor vestals. Be you all citizens. I place my tiara in your hands; I hope my clergy will follow my example.* On the 13th Ventose, be it when and

* Since the above was written, General Garibaldi has completed the parallel for us. The Italian paper, *Il Diritto*, gives a letter addressed to the Italians, as written by his own hand. It is more than enough to quote the three first sentences.

‘Italians!—To-morrow we shall have set the seal to our

what it may, the President Merlin announced to the Council of Ancients the great news (of the fall of the Temporal Power and restoration of the Roman Republic) in a message as follows :—‘ Citizen representatives, after 1,400 years humanity demands the destruction of an anti-social power; the cradle of which seems to have been placed under the reign of Tiberius, only to appropriate to itself the duplicity, the ferocious tyranny, the gloomy policy, the thirst for blood of the father of Nero.’* Where now is this fabric of impiety? And where in a little while will be the stolid blasphemies of this hour? The Christian world must perish before this godless anarchy can destroy the source of its peace and order.

And here I would fain break off. But there are thoughts nearer home which compel me to go on. The influence of this country for good or for evil, for order or for disorder, is great. As a Christian and an Englishman I deplore the licence of nameless writing and irresponsible speech, which, for the last twenty years, throughout the whole Pontificate of Pius IX., has encouraged and stimulated the anti-Christian revolutions of the Continent. We have among us public voices which

beautiful Revolution with the last shake of the tabernacle of idolatry, of imposture, and of Italian disgrace.

‘The pedestal of all tyrannies, the Papacy, has received the anathema of the whole world: and the nations are now gazing upon Italy as upon a redemptress.

‘And shall Italy, because of the arrest of a man, withdraw affrighted from this glorious mission?’

* *Moniteur*, tom. xxxix. p. 165. Gaume, *La Révolution*, vol. i. première livraison, pp. 149–152.

make themselves heard far and wide. And they, too, have preached the gospel of sedition. They would not have proclaimed the same maxims for the guidance of our own colonies or for the three kingdoms of our own country. But against the Pope anything is lawful. I will not quote chapter and verse, nor name the evangelists of these fatal doctrines. It is enough to recite a few axioms of their political morality. We are told that a people may lawfully at any time, and for any cause, overthrow its Government : that the will of the people is a sufficient justifying reason : that national aspirations are legitimate and supreme motives for the dissolution of a Government, even though confirmed by possession, prescription, and immemorial right : that a discontented minority may lawfully call in the aid of foreign sedition and foreign arms to overthrow its Government : that the principle of non-intervention binds Governments but not individuals : that even Governments bound not to interfere openly may do so secretly, that they may do by 'moral countenance' and encouragement in words what they may not do by arms : that they may look on approvingly when their subjects sow sedition in the peaceful provinces of neighbouring states, organise conspiracies in their capitals, and send arms and money to the conspirators. All these things have been publicly preached among us ; and these evil seeds wafted all over the three kingdoms, all over the empire, have already fallen on a prepared soil and are bearing bitter fruit. We designed them only for our neighbours, or only for the Pope ; but they have struck root in our own land, and we shall reap as we

have sown. As a Christian and an Englishman I protest against this gospel of sedition; and I pray God that my country may not, by the remotest influence or by a passing word, be partaker in its diffusion; that its public opinion, and loud public voice, and the power of its Legislature, may be restrained by Christian order and by international justice, and that we may not be guilty before God of abetting, by the lightest act, the infidel revolution which now threatens the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

If through our pride or blindness we do so, God will not be mocked. We have been sowing the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind. When we have preached the gospel of sedition to all nations, then shall the end come. Already the warnings are upon us. There are forerunners on the horizon, and storms below it. There are agencies which elude control and discovery; secret and sudden combinations which threaten us where we seem strongest and safest. We have dallied with the evils which only threatened others, and they have now recoiled upon ourselves. I trust in God that in the day when we shall be visited for this sin, they at least, who have protested against it, may be guiltless of the great offence.



